

Ergonomics and Laptop Computer Use



References: <http://www.healthycomputing.com/mobile/laptop/>
<http://www.dehs.umn.edu/ergo/office/laptop.html>

Laptops were originally designed to be used as a supplemental computer for people who are mobile. Most recently, these computers have been used as primary computing devices. In order to ensure that ergonomics is taken into consideration while using a laptop, please consider the following:

- **Use a docking station** for your laptop with an external monitor and keyboard when using the laptop as your desktop. Contact your IM or computer support person for more information on this set-up.
- **Take frequent breaks** away from the computer when using a laptop. The smaller keyboard area tends to cramp users more than working with a full size keyboard. A break can be a phone call, filing, or any other task other than working on the laptop.
- **Place peripherals**, such as the printer, far enough from your laptop so that you have to get up to retrieve printed documents. This is better than remaining seated and reaching to access documents. The short time you take to stand and retrieve your documents from the printer works as a posture break for your body.
- **Avoid placing papers on the desk** and looking at documents flat on your desk while you are using your laptop. Use a document or page holder. The document holder should be placed as close to the computer screen as possible to avoid awkward neck postures.
- The light in back of your computer should be approximately the same **brightness** as your computer screen.
- Place your laptop parallel to your window to **avoid glare** on the screen.
- Avoid placing your laptop such that **bright lights** are directly over your laptop.
- Avoid **lighting from above** that is also in front of you –

- use diffusers on the lights or ask your FM to remove the light bulbs, if needed.
- When **carrying your laptop**, use a rolling laptop case. Avoid stuffing your laptop case with additional items such as peripherals or notebooks and carrying the load on your shoulders via a strap.